

trade with Core labour standards; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government in the light thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) No decision was taken linking trade with labour standards at the Singapore Ministerial Conference. The decision taken was follows :

"We renew our commitment to the observance of internationally recognised core labour standards. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the competent body to set and deal with these standards, and we affirm our support for its work in promoting them. We believe that economic growth and development fostered be increased by trade and further trade liberalization contribute to the promotion of these standards. We reject the use of labour standards for protectionist purposes and agree that the comparative advantage of countries particularly lowwage developing countries, must in no way be put into question. In this regard, we note that the WTO and ILO Secretariats will continue their existing collaboration"

(b) Does not arise.

Registration of Patents under W.T.O.

4380. SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the number of patents registered or applied for registration of patents under the WTO Agreement till date;

(b) the names of the companies who have applied for registration and the names of the products; and

(c) the names of the countries who have applied for the same products which India has applied ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Settings up of EOUS in Gujarat

4381. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cent per cent export oriented units set up during each of the last three years in the State of Gujarat, locationwise; and

(b) the details of such units out of the above which have started commercial production in the State of Gujarat during the above period, location-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) 70 units were set up during the years 1993-94 to 1995-96 in Gujarat in the Districts of Ahmedabad, Baroda, Kheda, Bhavnagar, Kutch, Bharuch, Surat, Vilsad, Mehsana, Gandhinagar, Panchmahal, Sabarkantha and Amreli.

(b) 35 units have started commercial production in the State during the above period. These units are located in the Districts of Valsad, Gandhinagar, Ankleshwar, Bharuch, Mahuva, Bhavnagar, Sabarkantha, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Panchmahal, Surat and Mehsana.

Delays in clearance of imported Goods.

4382. SHRI SANAT MEHTA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether frequent complaints about delays in clearance of imported goods by the Customs Department are received;

(b) if so, the number of complaints received and disposed of during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) the time fixed for resolving complaints and average time generally taken;

(d) whether self removal procedure for customs clearance is under consideration;

(e) if so, the time by which the decision is likely to be taken; and

(f) if not, the reasons, therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) and (b) Representations are occasionally received in Custom Houses regarding delay in clearance from importers and exporters.

(c) Senior officers attend to such representations and they are resolved quickly. There is a grievance redressal machinery in each Custom House in the form of Public Grievance Committee and Watch Dog Panel where senior officers and representatives of Trade and Custom House Agents periodically meet to resolve such complaints.

(d) to (f) Facility of Self-Assessment is available to Government Departments, Public Sector Undertakings and other importers with proven and unblemished track record subject to fulfilment of specified conditions. Facility of Green Channel and Fast Track Clearance is also available to specified category of big importers such as Super Star Trading Houses, Star Trading Houses, Trading Houses

etc. In Addition, facility of single window clearance is available to other specified categories of importers.

The Department continually undertakes review of the import and export procedures. Improvements are discussed in the Tariff and General Conferences of Commissioners of Customs regularly. No time limits are fixed for such exercises.

Export of Cotton

4383. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether increase in export of cotton has come as a ride sheck to the textile industry; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to ansure that there is sufficient quantity of cotton in the country to meet the need of textiles industry ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) :

(a) and (b) During the current cotton season 1996-97, in view, of prospects of another good cotton crop similar to last year, there is no shortage of cotton. Before allowing export of cotton, the Government had taken into consideration all relevant factors, including estimates of production, availability, likely consumption by the mills, small spinners and non-mill sector, likely surplus, price trends, etc.

Import of Gold

4384. SHRI I.D. SWAMI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Enforcement Directorate has found gross irregularities in the import of gold;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the gold imported under the concession scheme was diverted to jewellery exporters who in turn are alleged to have violated the gold import scheme; and

(d) if so, the details of jewellery exporters who have violated the gold import scheme and the action Government have taken against them ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c) There have been no irregularities in the import of gold by the nominated agencies for supply to the exporters of gold jewellery under the schemes of Exim Policy. However, irregularities in export of gold jewellery by certain exporters have been detected by various investigating agencies including the Enforcement Directorate. These irregularities include :

- (i) Non-export of gold jewellery against gold loaned/sold by MMTC;
- (ii) Shortage in weight of gold jewellery in export consignments detected abroad;
- (iii) Quality of gold jewellery not upto the mark;
- (iv) Tampering of airway bills;
- (v) Collection of export percel/its payments abroad by EOU/DTA associates of MMTC;
- (vi) Non-realisation of export proceeds within prescribed time limit.

(d) 23 cases of alleged irregularities have been referred by MMTC to various investigating agencies including CBI, DRI, Enforcement Directorate and DGFT for investigation and necessary action. Enforcement Directorate are investigating 15 such cases.

Borjhar Airport, Guwahati

4385. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a proposal for declaration of Borjhar Airport at Guwahati as custom airport was turned down by his Ministry;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether a special package programme for North-Eastern region has been declared by the Prime Minister during his visit to the region recently;

(d) if so, whether the above matter is being reviewed;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The proposal to declare Borjhar Airport at Guwahati as a Customs Airport was examind in the past found to be premature since the airport lacked necessary infrastructural facilities. Besides, the projected scale of operations was found to be commercially unviable.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) to (f) The special package programme announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister includes upgrading Guwahati Airport as the hub centre for the North-East and developing it as an international airport. This is expected to be implemented by the end of the 9th Five Year Plan.